



**Meeting of the Lake District National Park Partnership
Friday 26th September 2025 at 10:30-12:30 – online**

MINUTES

Partner Name	Organisation	Apologies received
Celia Caulcott	Independent Chair	
Fran Richardson	ACT	Lorriane Smyth
Peter Frost-Pennington	Business Task Force	
Sally Lansbury	Cumberland Council	Michael Barry
Rachel Kelly	Cumbria Association of Local Councils	Sonia Hutchinson
Robert Frewen	Country Land & Business Association	Harriet Ranson
Carole Barr	Cumbria & Lakes Local Access Forum	
Gill Haigh	Cumbria Tourism	
Steve Trotter	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Michelle Waller
Ellyse Mather	Environment Agency	Carol Holt Andy Brown
Jake Thompson	Forestry Commission/Forestry England	Keith Jones Mark Holroyd Kevin May
Simon Johnson	Freshwater Biological Association	
Mike Hill	Friends of the Lake District	Leanne Parr Kate Willshaw
Marie Smallwood Kristof Fatsar	Historic England	Catherine Dewar
Keith Ashcroft Sarah Swindley	Lake District Foundation	
Gavin Capstick Steve Ratcliffe Hanna Latty Tim Duckmanton Peter Walter	LDNPA LDNPA Member	Tiffany Hunt Rob Allison
Veronica Fiorato	LDNPP	Adrian Anderson
Kerry Rennie	Natural England	Helen Kirby
Jez Westgarth	National Trust	
	National Farmers Union	David Hall
	RSPB	James Archer
	West Cumbria Rivers Trust	Jodie Mills
	Westmorland and Furness Council	Judith Derbyshire Angela Jones
	United Utilities	Kate Stark John Gorst
Helen Manns	University of Cumbria	

Observers/Speakers	Organisation	Apologies received
	Woodland Trust	Pete Leeson
Jen Cormack	Enterprising Cumbria	

Observers/Speakers	Organisation	Apologies received
Jody Ferguson	Local Nature Partnership	
John Barradell	Devolution Programme	
Tom Andrews	Devolution Programme	

1. Welcome (Chair)

- The Chair welcomed attendees to the online Partnership meeting
- Minutes from 19th August 2025 (Mungrisdale Village Hall) were approved

2. Chair's announcements (Chair)

- The Chair thanked all Partners for their continued participation in the Partnership's Plan development work, appreciating people's commitment to this process and the necessary additional meetings in 2025 to move this forward.

3. A new Partner – Enterprising Cumbria (Chair)

- The Chair was delighted to announce that Enterprising Cumbria was keen to become a Partner, noting its support for the Partnership since its inception. The Chair invited Jen Cormack (Enterprising Cumbria (EC) Board Member) to say a few words.
- Jen reminded Partners that EC had taken over from the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (a former Partner). EC covers a large number of sectors in its work including the nuclear industry, manufacturing, farming and the visitor economy. EC is in its first 12 months, so is still shaping as an organisation but appreciates the value of the Lake District National Park Partnership and its collaborative approach.
- The Chair asked Partners if they were willing to accept EC as a new Partner, reminding them that it was one vote per Partner. This was carried by a majority verdict.
- The Chair welcomed EC to the Partnership and confirmed that Jen would be EC's Partner Representative.

4. Devolution – a Mayoral Authority for Cumbria? (John Barradell and Tom Andrew, Devolution Programme team)

- The Chair welcomed John Barradell and Tom Andrew to the meeting.
- John is the Programme Director for Devolution and Tom is his deputy (seconded from Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government) a member of his team. Both work across the two councils (Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness) to support the Devolution programme.
- John confirmed the timetable for devolution:
 - The two councils taking a decision on 14th October 2025 as to whether to pursue devolution. If agreed this would create a single 'voice' for Cumbria both nationally and internationally. If agreed, the following steps would be taken:
 - A Statutory Instrument would be laid before Parliament
 - Once signed, in early 2026 (from February) a Combined Authority (CA) would be established made up of the leaders and deputy leaders of the two councils.
 - There is the possibility of other membership
 - There would be professional officers and statutory committees
 - The CA would have responsibility for transport, skills and investment

- Once the CA is established the 4 Members would start appointing and setting up strategies and policies (and related working groups)
- A Mayoral election would take place in May 2027
- Significant powers and £ would follow; the Partnership needs to ensure that it is involved

- Tom provided further clarity on the roadmap to a Mayor and the Government's direction of travel:
- A Foundation Authority would be followed by a Mayoral Authority, which could then be followed by a Strategic Mayoral Authority (the distinction being the appointment of a mayor and the amount of powers and £ devolved)
- The Government's direction of travel is to move to mayoral combined authorities across the country with increasing access to devolved £ and partnership working
- There is a clear Government priority to complete devolution for the North of England (Cheshire and Cumbria being the only counties without, and Lancashire is currently a Foundation Authority with no mayor as yet.
- MCAs are not putting county councils back together, but rather would be a strategic basis for how LPAs will work together.
- The intention is to streamline activity.
- The Police and Fire services would be integrated
- The MCA would be the Local transport authority
- A Spatial Development strategy will also be a requirement

- Partners asked a number of questions of the speakers which resulted in the following answers for clarity:
- There would be a duty on Government to respond to Mayoral requests
- Once established a request for further devolution can be asked of Government
- The Mayor will have the ability to influence and help advocate for Cumbria getting more
- The Mayor will add additionality rather than taking powers from elsewhere
- Additional £ will be provided: £11m per year over 30 years; also development £ already in the system. Unlikely to get any movement on per capita funding equation

- The Chair thanked the speakers and suggested that it would be good to bring them back to a future meeting when the roadmap is clearer so that we can think about how, as a Partnership, we can engage with an emerging CA.

Break

5. Plan Development (Chair and Veronica Fiorato. Partnership Manager)

- Partners had been asked to come to the meeting with questions/comments on the emerging draft Plan, with the Chair clarifying that we would not revisit the Vision, Ambitions and Objectives (as these had been agreed at the previous meeting) but that we could together look at targets.
- The following remarks were captured as part of the discussion:
 - o The core of the Plan comes quite late in the draft, could this be moved up?
 - o Could sustainable development across all sectors be drawn out?
 - o Remaining acronyms should be removed for clarity
 - o Need a compelling message up front about the Vision and why it's important
 - o More clarity needed on expectations on Partners, and the 'how' of delivery

- Need to nail Partner contributions and those of others (RACI analysis?). The Partnership Manager and Chair confirmed that we would look at Action planning and Delivery in a future Partnership meeting.
 - Suggestion of an open letter from the Chair at the top of the document
 - Need to focus on place being special, and almost forget about the designation (designated because special, not special because designated)
 - Can we demonstrate to public what we have learned/achieved?
 - Some of nature targets are very challenging – e.g. 75% of water bodies is massive
 - Need stretching but also realistic targets – e.g. peat is a moving feast because of changes to the way in which Government is funding this, and private finance is not yet on stream
 - Something needed about possible mobility of targets, e.g. caveats
- The Chair thanked Partners for their contributions, and the Partnership Manager confirmed that the drafting team would take away these suggestions and work through as part of the next draft. There was general agreement in the room that we should not, however, hold up public consultation as an important next step.
 - The Partnership Manager then ran through the revised timetable for Partners (slide shared).

6. AOB (Chair)

a. Transport Task & Finish Group update

The Chair briefly updated Partners on progress with the Transport Task & Finish Group's work: the Group has completed its task, set by Partners, and has shared its report and recommendations with the Chair. An Extraordinary online meeting (see below) would be put in diaries to allow discussion of this, and the report will be shared with all Partnership (shared as part of the Extraordinary meeting papers).

b. Next meeting:

REMINDER: There will be an extraordinary meeting in October (online) to discuss the Transport Task and Finish Group report, followed by an in-person full Partnership meeting on 5th November 10.00 – 15.00 (venue and timings tbc).

General list of acronyms used at Partnership meetings:

AES	Agri-Environment Schemes
BA	Breakthrough Actions
BDUK	Broadband Delivery UK
BTF	Business Task Force
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CLS	Carbon Landscapes Scheme
CHF	Community Housing Fund
CLT	Community Land Trusts
CLH	Community-led Housing
CW	Cumbria Woodlands
CWT	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
FC	Forestry Commission
FLD	Friends of the Lake District
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FOTP	Fibre to the premises
FTE	Full time equivalent
GS	Gain Share
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LDNPA	Lake District National Park Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
NCA	National Character Area
NE	Natural England
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NFU	National Farmers Union
NT	National Trust
SOTP	State of The Park Report
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TOR	Terms of reference
TVGM	Tactical Visitor Management Group
UU	United Utilities